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Duxbury Clipper

ANIMAL SHELTER

## Foundation to Raise Funds for a New Town Animal Shelter

By DEBORA BABIN KATZ

The Animal Shelter Foundation started with a group of individuals who wanted to raise the money necessary to build a new animal shelter, according to Corinne Woodworth, the organization's president.

Comprised of a 10 member board of volunteer citizens, it formed in May and held its kick off fund raising event in conjunction with the town's Fourth of July Parade.

Their float carried the foundation's message with signs stating: "This float is bigger than your current Animal Shelter." Residents were stunned and questioned members of the foundation as they walked behind the float down Washington Street, said Woodworth. The float, sponsored by Freeman Boynton's Construction Company and an undisclosed individual donor, took third place in the parade's contest.

The current Animal Shelter measures 14 by 16-feet with only two three by four dog runs, a kitty condo and office space all jammed into one room. It is located among the town's highway department trucks and equipment, which visitors must often dodge to access the shelter. Although some improvements have been made to the building, "it is still inadequate to meet Duxbury's needs," noted Haley-Dee Parlin, the town's animal control officer.

"I was personally appalled at the current conditions of the animal shelter," said Woodworth. Residents, picking up their lost pet at the shelter, are also shocked by the conditions and often become regular donors of food and supplies, added Parlin.

On any given day, the shelter can have up to eight dogs at one time, said Parlin. Since "this is a no-kill shelter, the

building may house these animals for three to four months before they are adopted out."

Parlin makes due with the current conditions by stacking dog crates and using folding cages for additional animals, which uses up any available walking space. Due to the small quarters, Parlin and her assistant animal control officer, Patty Schupp, often rely on fostering out dogs to volunteer Duxbury residents. Her ingenuity allows the shelter to meet state laws requiring shelters to hold animals for 10 days before releasing them for adoption.

Building code violations also exist within the current facility, including no bathrooms for staff or visitors. "The current shelter is a very labor intensive environment with no room for files or a way of doing paperwork, no computer, no bathroom, no way to wash down runs in the winter, unsanitary wood walls, and not enough room for the animals," said Parlin. One Duxbury Animal Shelter Foundation board member described the current animal shelter facility as "an animal Alcatraz."

Fortunately, the town received in March a \$25,000 donation from Joe and Billie Perry, on behalf of the Aerosmith band, towards the construction of a new animal shelter. In addition to the Aerosmith gift, "the town has another \$15,000 which includes a \$5,000 contribution from the Copeland Foundation and \$10,000 approved at town meeting." As of this week, there is now \$42,000 available to build the new shelter.

"Now it will be up to the Duxbury Animal Shelter Foundation to raise the additional funds needed to build the new shelter. The foundation also hopes to start an endowment fund, said its members. "We plan to raise the needed sum privately in order to take the

burden off taxpayers," said Woodworth.

"The foundation is also researching a matching donation grant from a local pet business available to registered no-kill shelters," added Chuck Leonard, a Director of the Duxbury Animal Shelter Foundation, Inc.

Parlin's proposed plans include a 38 by 44-foot "totally handicap accessible" shelter which will include a bathroom on town owned DPW property. The location of the new shelter will be on land which is "located up on a hill in a valley away from neighboring houses," she said. Town officials have earmarked this piece of land as the ideal location for the new shelter since it is away from residential properties, unlike the current shelter.

The proposed animal shelter is based on line drawings from Marshfield's animal shelter which was completed in 1991, "using only \$22,000 of town money and the rest from donated services and supplies," said Norma Haskins, Marshfield's animal control officer. "We figured out that close to \$50,000 of goods and materials were donated," such as the septic system, plumbing, heating, tile, and fencing, added Haskins, who filled in as Duxbury's animal control officer prior to Parlin's hiring.

Parlin estimates "to build Duxbury's new shelter from the ground up it could cost \$100,000 or more," however she hope to get supplies, services and materials donated.



**Duxbury Animal Shelter Foundation's Float won third place with this public awareness message. (photo courtesy of Nan O'Neill)**

The proposed shelter includes nine 4 by 12-foot dog runs with one run used as an isolation pen for strays brought in at night. The animal control officer is recommending all indoor runs to reduce noise, allow the dogs to exercise during inclement weather, and will maintain a clean and sanitary environment for the animals year round." A gated fence area, an outdoor enclosure for cats, an exercise pen, and a larger outdoor area where community obedience classes and

training could occur are also in the plans, said Parlin.

The Duxbury Animal Shelter Foundation "is optimistic that we will be able to raise the funds needed to improve the standards of our shelter" noted Woodworth. "If your dog or cat were missing it would be comforting to know that it was being sheltered in a decent place until it could be returned to your care...which will only happen with the continued support of concerned residents.